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20 CFR Ch. II (4–1–00 Edition)

§219.3 When evidence is required.

(a) *To prove initial eligibility.* The Board will ask for evidence to prove a claimant is eligible for benefits when he or she applies for benefits. Usually the Board will ask the claimant to furnish specific kinds of evidence or information by a certain date to prove initial eligibility for benefits. If evidence or information is not received by that date, the Board may decide that the claimant is not eligible for benefits and will deny his or her application.

(b) *To prove continued entitlement.* After a claimant establishes entitlement to an annuity, the Board may ask that annuitant to produce by a certain date information or evidence needed to decide whether he or she may continue to receive an annuity or whether the annuity should be reduced or stopped. If the information is not received by the date specified, the Board may decide that the person is no longer entitled to benefits or that his or her annuity should be stopped or reduced.

§219.4 Who is responsible for furnishing evidence.

(a) *Claimant or representative responsible.* When evidence is required to prove a person's eligibility for or right to continue to receive annuity or lump-sum payments, that claimant or his or her representative is responsible for obtaining and submitting the evidence to the Board.

(b) *What to do when required evidence will be delayed.* When the required evidence cannot be furnished within the specified time, the claimant or representative who was asked to furnish the evidence or information should notify the Board and explain why there will be a delay. If the delay is caused by illness, failure to receive the information from another source, or a similar situation, the claimant will be allowed a reasonable time to secure the evidence or information. If the information is not received within a reasonable time as determined by the Board, the claimant or representative who was asked to furnish the evidence or information will be notified of the effect that his or her failure to furnish the evidence or information will have on the claimant's eligibility to receive or continue to receive payments.

§219.5 Where and how to provide evidence.

(a) *When Board office is accessible.* A claimant or representative should give his or her evidence to an employee of the Railroad Retirement Board office where he or she files the application. An employee of the Board will tell the claimant or representative what is needed and how to get it.

(b) *When Board office is not accessible.* A claimant who lives in an area where there is no Board office or who is unable to travel to a Board office may send evidence to the Board office nearest to where the claimant lives. A claimant who lives outside the United States may take evidence to the American embassy or consulate or other Foreign Service Office nearest to where he or she lives or send it to the headquarters of the Board.

§219.6 Original records or copies as evidence.

(a) *General.* A claimant or an annuitant may be asked to show an original document or record as evidence to prove eligibility for or continued entitlement to payments. Where possible, a Board employee will make a photocopy or transcript of these original documents or records and return the original documents to the person who furnished them. A person may also submit certified copies of original records and, in some cases, uncertified birth notifications. These types of records are described below in this section.

(b) *Foreign-language documents.* If the evidence submitted is a foreign-language record or document, the Board may require that the record be translated. An acceptable translation includes, but is not limited to, a translation certified by a United States consular official or employee of the Department of State authorized to certify evidence or by an employee of the Social Security Administration.

(c) *Certified copies of original records.* The Board will accept copies of original records or extracts from records if they are certified as true and exact copies of the original by—

- (1) The official custodian of the record;
- (2) A Veterans Administration employee, if the evidence was given to

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that agency to obtain veterans benefits;

(3) A Social Security Administration employee, if the evidence was given to that agency to obtain social security benefits;

(4) A United States Consular Officer, an employee of the Department of State, or an employee of the Immigration and Naturalization Service authorized to certify evidence received outside the United States; or

(5) An employee of a state agency or state welfare office authorized to certify copies of original records in the agency's or office's files.

§219.7 How the Board decides what is convincing evidence.

When the Board receives evidence, a Board representative examines it to see if it is convincing evidence. If it is, no other evidence is needed. In deciding whether the evidence is convincing, the Board representative decides whether—

(a) The information contained in the evidence was given by a person in a position to know the facts;

(b) There was any reason to give false information when the evidence was created;

(c) The information contained in the evidence was given under oath, or in the presence of witnesses, or with the knowledge that there was a penalty for giving false information;

(d) The evidence was created at the time the event took place or shortly after;

(e) The evidence has been altered or has any erasures on it; and

(f) The information contained in the evidence agrees with other available evidence, including existing Board records.

§219.8 Preferred evidence and other evidence.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* When a claimant submits the type of evidence shown as preferred in subparts B and C of this part, the Board will generally find it is convincing evidence. This means that unless there is information in the Board's records that raises a doubt about the evidence, other evidence to prove the same fact will not be needed.

(b) *Other evidence.* If preferred evidence is not available, the Board will

consider any other evidence a claimant furnishes. If the other evidence consists of several different records or documents which all show the same information, the Board may determine that it is convincing evidence even though it is not preferred evidence. If the other evidence is not convincing by itself, the claimant will be asked to submit additional evidence. If the additional evidence shows the same information all the evidence considered together may be convincing evidence.

(c) *Board decision.* When the Board has convincing evidence of the facts that must be proven, or when it is clear that the evidence provided does not prove the necessary facts, the Board will make a formal decision about the applicant's rights to benefits.

§219.9 Evidence, information, and records filed with the Board.

The Railroad Retirement Act provides criminal penalties for any persons who misrepresent the facts or make false statements to obtain payments for themselves or someone else. All evidence and documents given to the Board are kept confidential and are not disclosed to anyone but the person who submitted them, except under the rules described in part 200 of this chapter.

Subpart B—Evidence of Age and Death

§219.20 When evidence of age is required.

(a) Evidence of age is required when an employee applies for an annuity under the Railroad Retirement Act or for Medicare coverage under title XVIII of the Social Security Act.

(b) Evidence of age is also required from a person who applies for a spouse's or divorced spouse's, widow's, widower's, surviving divorced spouse's, parent's, or child's annuity under the Railroad Retirement Act, or for Medicare coverage under title XVIII of the Social Security Act.

§219.21 Types of evidence to prove age.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* The best type of evidence to prove a claimant's age is—